

NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

**RONALD J. TENPAS
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY**

Nine Executive Drive, Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208, Telephone (618) 628-3700

For Immediate Release

MAY 18, 2005

Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced that Mark Howard, of Alton, Illinois, pled guilty May 16, 2005, in federal district court, East St. Louis, Illinois, to: Aiding and Abetting the Destruction of Personal Property (a mailbox) by Explosive; Possession of a Destructive Device; Possession of a Machinegun (four counts); and Possession of Silencer with No Serial Number, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 844(i) and 922(o), and 26 U.S.C. §5861(d) and 5861(i). The terms of the plea agreement entered in this case also require Howard to forfeit the vehicle that he used to transport the explosive device used to destroy the mailbox.

The penalties for Destruction of Personal Property by Means of Explosive are a minimum of five years' and a maximum of twenty years' imprisonment. The remaining charges each carry a maximum of ten years' imprisonment. Each count to which Howard pled guilty also carries a \$250,000 maximum fine, and three years' supervised release.

In a Factual Stipulation entered by the parties, Howard acknowledged that he drove a co-defendant to a rural location on Torch Club Road in Alton, Illinois, on July 5, 2004, where the co-defendant detonated an explosive device that destroyed the mailbox. In the Stipulation, Howard also admitted to possessing eight explosive devices and four machineguns, as well as a silencer that had no serial number.

Sentencing is set for Howard on October 1, 2:00 p.m., in federal court in East St. Louis.

In other cases, which arose from the investigation into Howard and others, the following defendants have pled guilty:

1. William Cody Voigt, of Alton, pled guilty to possession of a machinegun on May 16, 2005. Sentencing is set for September 12, 2005, at 11:00 A.M.
2. Charles Hemphill, of Alton, pled guilty on May 4, 2005, to 12 counts of possession of a machinegun, 1 count of possession of a machinegun receiver; 1 count of possession of a silencer with no serial number, and 1 count of possession of a destructive device. Sentencing is set for August 8 at 11:00 a.m.
3. Eric Terry, of Alton, pled guilty May 5, 2005, to four counts of possession of a machinegun. Sentencing is set for September 16 at 1:30 p.m.
4. Chris Hall, of Alton, pled guilty May 13, 2005, to two counts of possession of a machinegun. Sentencing is set for August 26 at 1:30 p.m.

The maximum sentences that can be imposed for each count to which Voigt, Hemphill, Terry, and Hall pled guilty are 10 years' imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, and 3 years' supervised release.

Prosecution of these case resulted from an investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.

The cases were prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Stephen B. Clark and Andrew Simonson.